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AUTHOR Taylor, Tom; Potter, Eloise F.
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ABSTRACT

Native Americans had a well-developed agriculture long before the arrival of the Europeans. Three staples--corn, beans, and squash--were supplemented with other gathered plants or cultivated crops such as white potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and peanuts. Native Americans had no cows, pigs, or domesticated chickens; they depended almost completely on hunting for their meat. In North Carolina, the two largest game animals were the white-tail deer and the black bear, although small mammals, birds, fish, and shellfish were important sources of nourishment. The first article in this booklet, "How the Indians Hunted and Fished," presents an account of North Carolina Indian life and living skills. The second article "Native American Foods and Cookery in Pre-Colonial North Carolina" describes the diet and cooking methods of the Indians, including the adoption of the new foods brought to the New World by the Europeans. A listing of the wild foods of Native Americans is included as well as Native American recipes. This book contains numerous pictures illustrating the text. (ALL)

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North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences
John B. Funderburg, Director
Bicentennial Plaza, P.O. Box 27647, Raleigh, N.C. 27611 - Telephone 919/733-7450

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
James A. Graham, Commissioner

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NATIVE AMERICAN FOODS AND COOKERY

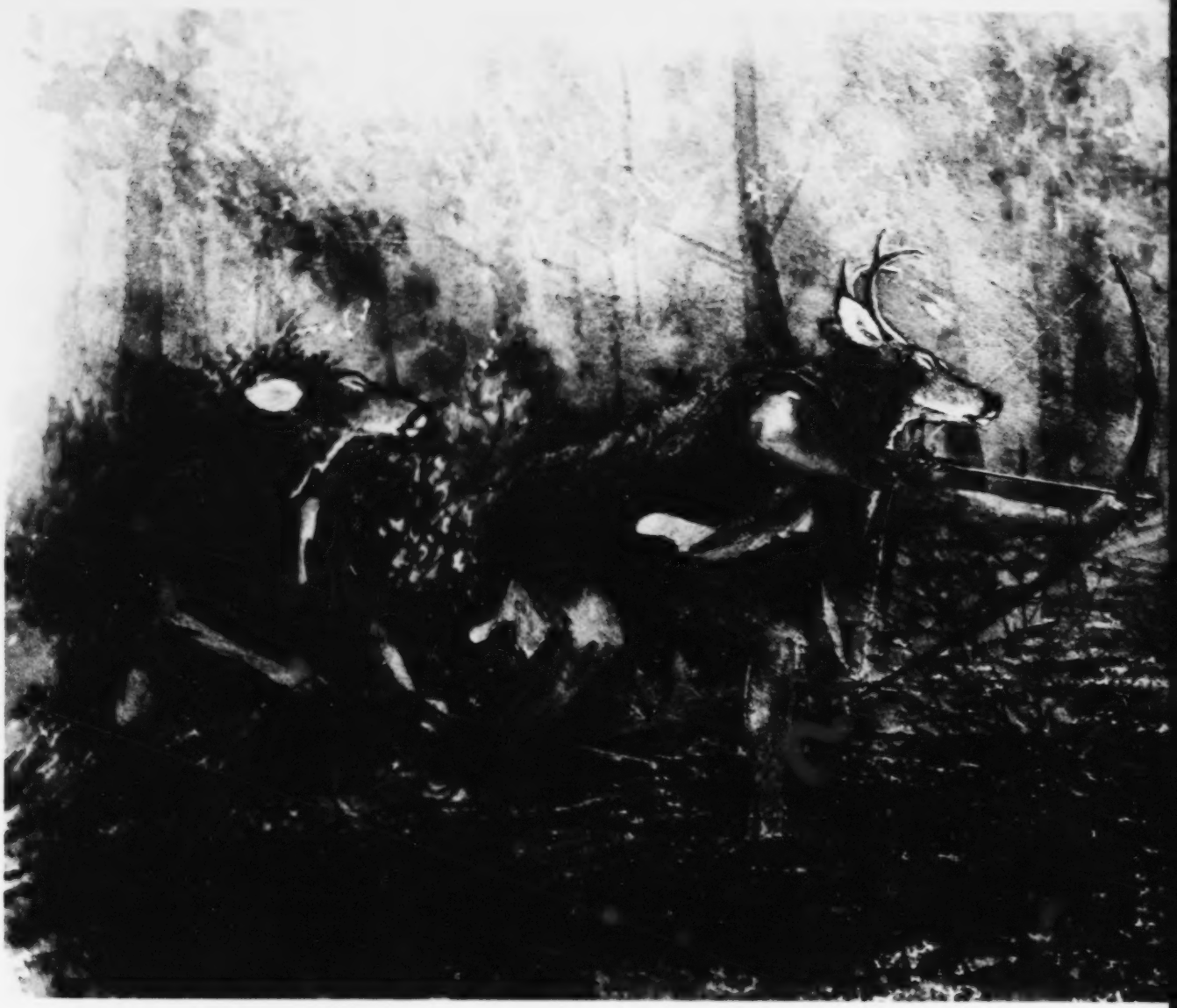
Native Americans had a well-developed agriculture long before the arrival of the first European explorers. Corn, beans, and squash—the three sisters—were the principal crops, but many other plants were cultivated or gathered from the wild. Corn, dried and ground into meal, was made into bread or mush. Other crops included white potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, peanuts, and tobacco, which was used mostly for ceremonial purposes by smoking it in pipes or scattering a powder on fire or water.

Because Indian people had no cows, pigs, or domesticated chickens, they depended almost completely on hunting for their meat. In North Carolina the two largest game animals were the White-tail Deer and the Black Bear, but small mammals, birds, fish, and shellfish were important sources of nourishment.

Much of what we call "Southern cooking" is really just Indian cooking modified by the use of products from the domesticated animals as well as the cultivated plants (including cabbage, carrots, and sugar cane) that were brought to America by European settlers.

Many plants first cultivated by Native Americans are of major economic importance today. Indian corn, or maize, was developed from a grass-like plant with no husk and only a few kernels on each stalk. Corn and white potatoes, both gifts of American Indian agriculture, now rank with wheat and rice as the four leading food crops worldwide.

1986
Year of the Native American
in North Carolina



How the Indians Hunted & Fished

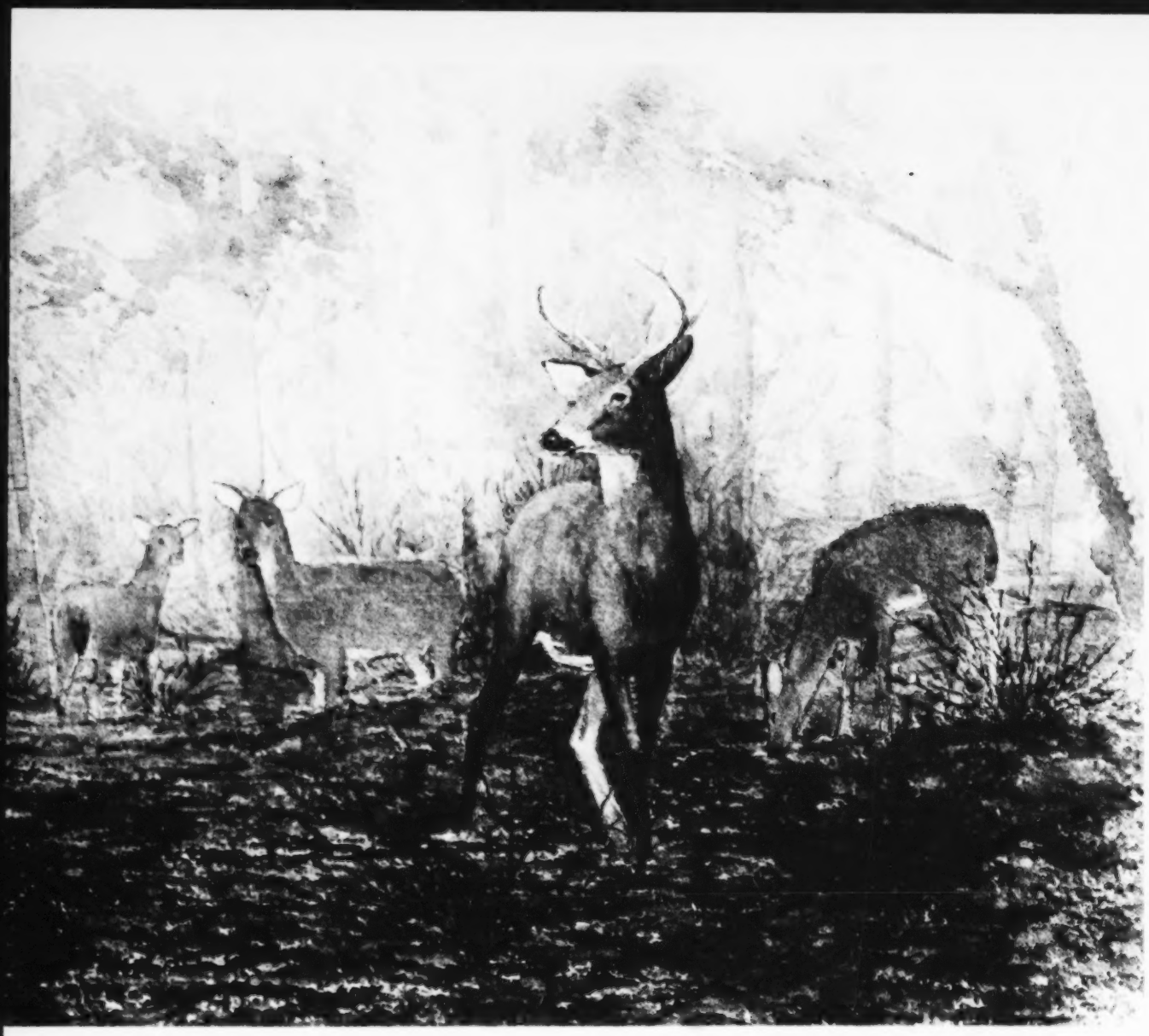
Indians living in North Carolina when the first colonist arrived were remarkably efficient hunters and fishermen.

by Tom Taylor
paintings by David Williams

HOW DID NORTH CAROLINA'S INDIANS hunt and fish? Listen to John Lawson's description of an early 18th century Tuscarora hunting camp in the Coastal Plain:

When the Savages go a hunting, they commonly go out in great Numbers, and often times a great many Days journey from home, beginning at the coming in of the Winter. In these Hunting-Quarters, they have their Wives and Ladies of the Camp, where they eat all the Fruits and Dainties of that Country, and live in all the Mirth and Jollity, which it is possible for such people to entertain themselves withal.

This picture of hunters with "Wives and Ladies" at hand, eating "Fruits and Dainties," and living in "Mirth and Jollity" may contradict a few of our starker images of Indian life. And yet as North Carolina's first surveyor-general, Lawson traveled extensively throughout the State in the early 18th century, often staying at Indian villages, and he was a keen observer of Indian life. Indeed, first-hand accounts like his and archaeological evidence recovered at various sites enable us to draw a fairly accurate picture of Indian life and their hunting and fishing methods at the time the white man came. Their techniques were often unusual, but their simple tools and stratagems were often the best solutions to difficult problems.

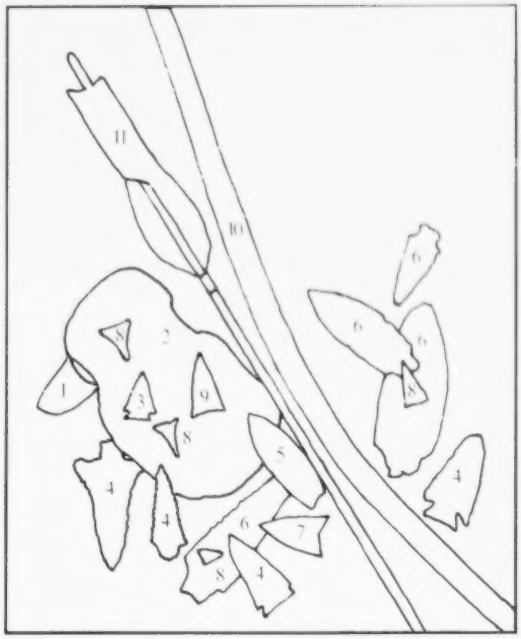


The Tuscarora camp in Lawson's description was probably similar to other Indian winter hunting camps scattered throughout the State. They were located in prime hunting territories that were sometimes several hundred miles from summer villages. Large amounts of game were required to meet the protein needs of the tribes, and hunting parties scoured the countryside. Young boys and old men served as runners, carrying meat back to the camp and relaying messages between the camp and the hunters.

The camp consisted of snug, circular wigwams half-buried in earth to keep out cold winter winds. Inside the wigwams, raised sleeping couches covered with deer skins, bear hides or buffalo robes circled the fire. Dried squash, gourds, corn and baskets of dried fruits, beans, nuts and corn meal were stored under the benches while strings of dried deer jerky stretched overhead. The people ate often and well, and midnight feasts often lasted until dawn.

These celebrations often featured white-tailed deer, the staple of southeastern Indian life. Two techniques were commonly used to kill deer on these winter hunts — the fire-surround and decoy hunting. Fire-surrounds were the most effective way to kill large amounts of game. A band of Indians, sometimes numbering several hundred, would set fire to a circle up to five miles in circumference. The flames and smoke pushed the animals toward the center of the circle, and hunters shot the frightened game as the ring slowly closed. One

Stalking Indians prepare to bring down a handsome buck at the edge of a North Carolina forest 300 years ago. Having donned their deer decoys — hollowed-out skulls and deer skins — when they caught sight of the browsing herd, and imitating the grazing movements of deer, they creep to within 15 yards of the animals. The bow's short range required a hunter to draw as close to his prey as possible before releasing his arrow. The white-tailed deer was a primary source of protein for the Indians, but deer skins were used for dress and were also an important trade commodity. The skilled hunter brought meat back to his family, was revered by his tribe, and garnered a special place in the after-life.



The front cover photograph contains a variety of Indian spear points and arrowheads found in North Carolina. Strangely enough, most points you still find are not arrowheads at all, but are spear points and thousands of years old. Only the Late Woodland points in the following sequence are arrowheads: 1. Hardaway blade (9-10,000 B.C.); 2. Grooved Axe (Archaic); 3. Palmer Jasper (6500-7000 B.C.); 4. Kirk (6000-7000 B.C.); 5. Guilford (4000 B.C.); 6. Savannah River (2000 B.C.); 7. Large point (Woodland, 500 A.D.); 8. Stemmed point (Late Woodland, 1000 A.D.); 9. Point (Late Woodland, 1000 A.D.); 10. Bow (nineteenth century); 11. Arrow shaft and fletching (recent).

An old tracker passes on his skills to a young Cherokee. They are clad in their cold-weather dress, deer-skin leggings and jackets. They use a variety of weapons and implements to hunt. Above, the spear has a detachable head and the atlatl was a device used to throw the spear. The spear was older than the bow and arrow, used for thousands of years by Indians to hunt large game like the mammoth, bison and elk. A knife, tomahawk and stone scrapers were used in the butchering process. Indians made their bows from black locust or hickory, and their strings from twisted bear gut or deer skin. Arrows 28 to 34 inches in length were tipped with shark's teeth, garfish scales, tips of deer antlers as well as various sharpened stones. Turkey feathers made fine arrow fletching. A snare felled small game as did the blowgun and its tufted 10-inch dart. Fish were caught with hooks made from bones.

circle hunt conducted in Pennsylvania in 1760 yielded 111 buffalo, 98 deer, 18 bears, and countless small game animals. The total might have been higher before this date because wildlife numbers were already declining.

Fire-surrounds also helped perpetuate the open meadows favored by deer and wild turkeys, and early explorers of North Carolina reported seeing vast savannas broken by huge hardwood trees in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. Clearing the forest floor also made it easier for Indians to travel and gather nuts, an important source of protein. Periodic controlled burning is still employed today by wildlife managers to maintain high wildlife populations.

Decoy hunting was another technique for hunting deer, this one practiced by individuals. Decoys were made of hollow deer skulls and tanned hides with lightweight hardwood ribs giving form to the costume. The decoy was tucked into a sash worn around the waist, and the hunter could quickly slip it on when he encountered game. Sweeping the skull from side to side to imitate the movements of a grazing deer, the hunter would slowly work his way towards the herd. At close range, he would cast aside his decoy and shoot at his prey. Occasionally, hunters played a more dangerous game. A rutting buck could often be provoked into an aggressive approach by snorting and rattling the decoy antlers against a branch. Some Indians were so skilled at imitating deer movements that they drew fire from another hunter working the same area.

ALTHOUGH THE WHITE-TAILED DEER was the staple of Indian diets, they hunted other game as well. The black bear was prized chiefly for its oil, although the meat was also eaten. This oil was used extensively for cooking, and Lawson said that "Bear's grease is the sweetest and least offensive of any animals I ever tasted." Indians also rubbed bear oil on their bodies for protection against insects and cold weather. When mixed with a powdered plant root found in the Mountains, bear oil also killed head lice.

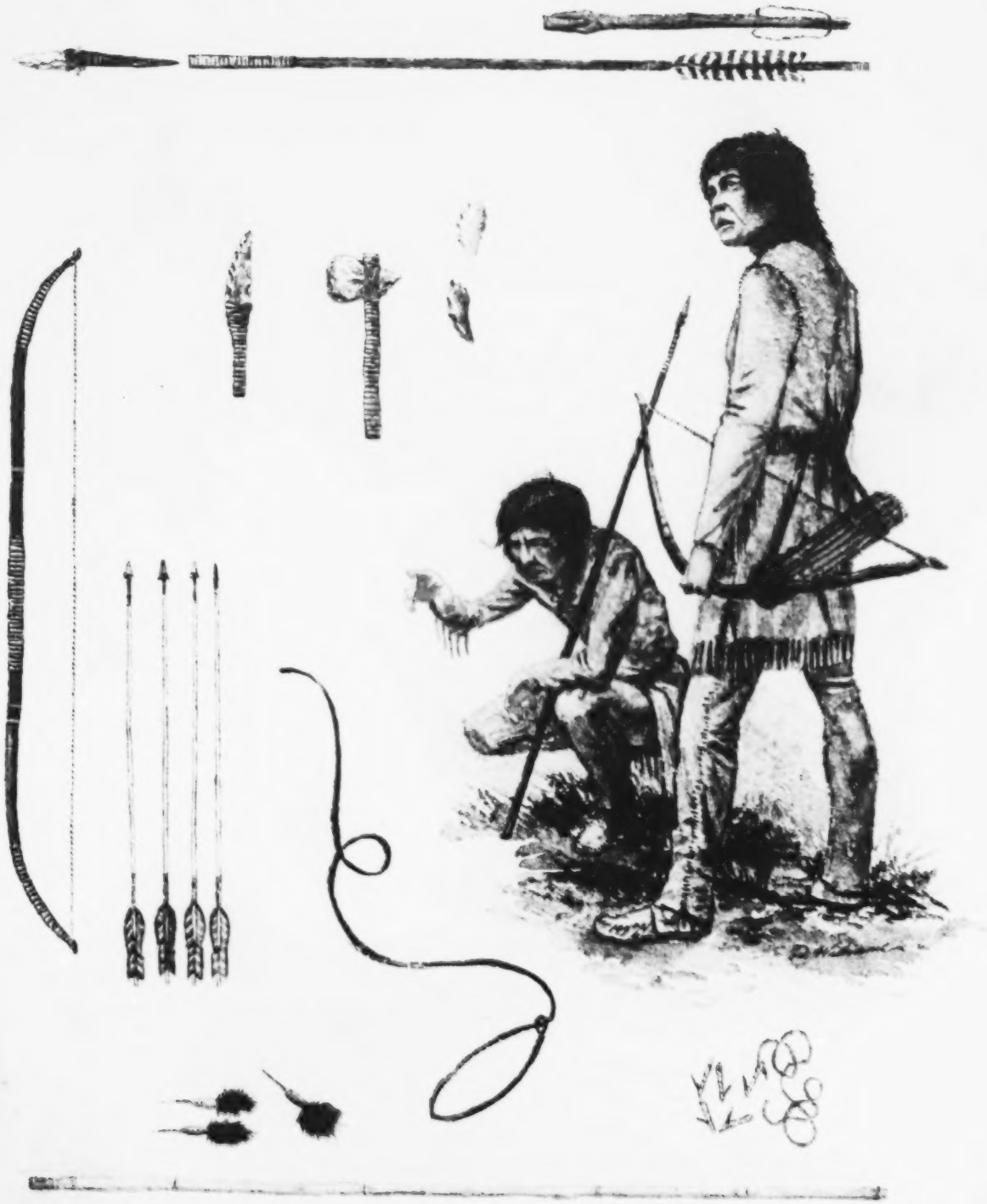
Most bear hunting was done by groups in the winter when the animals were hibernating. Den trees were located by searching for claw marks on the bark, and a hunter would strike the tree with an ax or imitate a bear cub in distress to see if the den was inhabited. If the sleeping bruin was aroused, the hunt was on. One man would climb an adjacent tree and toss a handful of burning moss or bark down the hollow trunk to smoke the critter out while the other hunters waited. When the bear emerged, everyone would shoot.

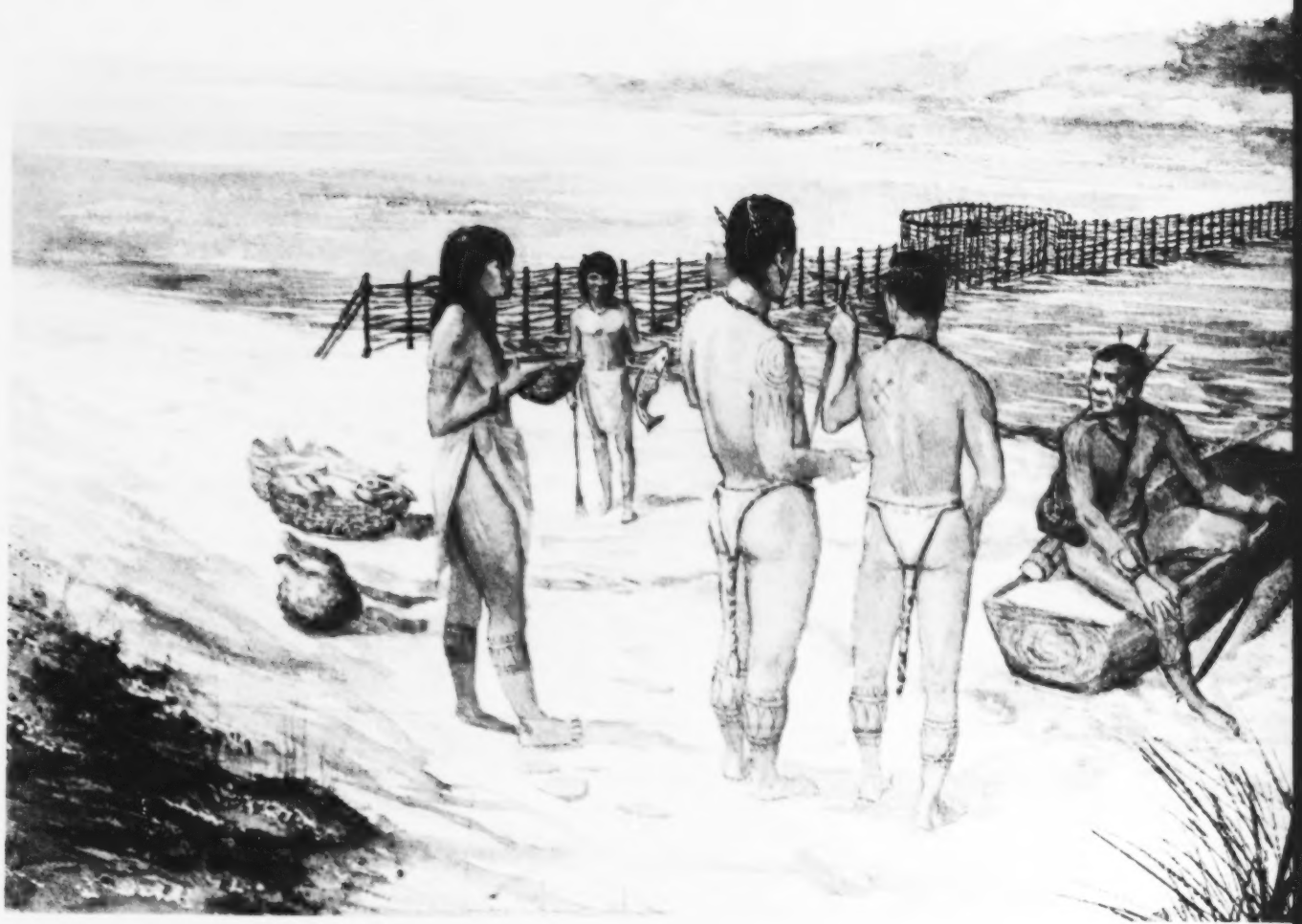
Wild turkey, waterfowl and small game were also eaten. Captive turkeys were occasionally used as live decoys, and wing bones were used as turkey calls. Turkeys tended to travel in large flocks in early times, and apparently weren't as wary as they are today.

Birds and small game were killed with bows, blowguns and throwing sticks or caught in snares and deadfalls. Blowguns were widely used, and were made of hollow pieces of cane five to seven feet long. The darts were not poisoned, but were tipped with sharp points made of bone, fish teeth or other substances. Blowgun hunters would often sit concealed in trees and kill songbirds as they lit upon branches. Larger game, including squirrels and rabbits, were killed with a shot to the eye. These devices were quite accurate, and Cherokees could kill game at ranges of 60 feet. Arrows used for small-game hunting were seldom equipped with points, but were often made of cane with sharp, fire-hardened tips. These arrows were also used on big game because Indian bows were very powerful. Hernando De Soto's Spanish conquistadors found that they could not pull most Indian bows back to full-draw, and a lucky shot with a fire-hardened cane arrow would occasionally penetrate armor.

On the coast, ducks and geese were hunted by a method we have come to call fire-lighting. A fire was built on a clay bed in the bow of a dugout canoe, and an archer stood behind the fire. Ducks were not usually alarmed by the fire, possibly because they were accustomed to the reflections of the moon and stars on the water. Hidden by the fire, the hunters were often able to enter a raft of ducks or geese. Early white settlers quickly adopted this technique with a few refinements. Brass lanterns were substituted for fires and muzzleloaders replaced bows. Maryland outlawed the practice in 1730, and North Carolina followed in 1777. Waterfowl were also caught on baited fish hooks suspended over creeks, as well as being hunted by more conventional means.

The enormous flocks of passenger pigeons that darkened the skies were also an important source of protein. Indians carrying flaming pine knots and long poles would enter pigeon roosts at night, knocking down as many birds as they could carry. These birds were later rendered into oil. The numbers killed must have been prodigious for Lawson records seeing 100 gallons of pigeon oil in a small Piedmont Siouan village of 17 families. This oil was used as "butter" on cornbread, and was also used for cooking.





SPRING MARKED THE BEGINNING of the Indians' second season. They would return to their summer villages which were usually located in river valleys or along the shores of the coastal sounds. Fertile riverine soils were easily cultivated, and all North Carolina Indians farmed extensively. Farming was considered woman's work, although the men cleared land and helped plant and harvest when the work load was at its peak. Spring and summer also allowed time for two favorite activities — fishing and war.

The small tribes of Algonquian Indians that lived along the Outer Banks and the coastal rivers and sounds depended heavily upon fish. An excellent record of their way of life exists in the watercolors of John White — the first governor of the Lost Colony on Roanoke Island. White painted 76 watercolors of coastal Indian life before returning to England on the last ship.

These Indians built extensive pole weirs that are almost identical to the pound nets used on the coast today. Weirs were fences or enclosures that were placed in strategic locations on sounds and rivers and also ran across the mouths of tidal creeks, leaving many fish stranded at low tide. Herring, shad, striped bass and other anadromous fish were taken in large numbers during their spring runs, and were dried and smoked on wooden racks over campfires. Striped bass were also speared or netted on their spawning grounds, and the Hatteras Indians used clubs to kill large numbers of bluefish when the big schools entered the shallows in the late fall.

One of White's best watercolors, entitled "The Manner of Their Fishing," shows coastal Indians "fire-fishing" from a dugout at night. Youngsters would tend a fire built on a clay bed in the center of the dugout while adults wielded spears or dipnets made of braided skin, bark or sinew in the bow and stern.

On a North Carolina coastal river, Indians gather near their fishing weir during an April herring run. They constructed the weir from cane or sticks stretched across the river and designed to trap the fish within several small enclosures. It was easy to catch fish this way, and children could wade into the shallows and spear the fish. In other areas in North Carolina, stone weirs formed a V-shape across a river and fish were speared as they passed through the narrow opening, or caught in conical traps. Indians did not consider fishing as important as hunting or agriculture. The dugout canoe on the right of the illustration was made by successively burning a felled tree and scraping it with shells. The Indians' tattoos are tribal markings.

Fish were attracted to the light, and large catches were often made. Indian men, boys and girls also stalked fish in the shallows during the day.

The Sioux warriors who chased buffalo across the Great Plains scorned fish, but their distant cousins — the 24 Siouan tribes that inhabited the North Carolina Piedmont — harbored no such prejudices. Many of the stone weirs that they built on Piedmont and Mountain rivers still exist, to the delight of archaeologists and to the occasional distress of canoeists.

These V-shaped weirs pointed downstream, and migrations of bass, suckers, shad and other fish were vulnerable to Indian spears and dipnets as they passed through the weir's narrow opening. Later, conical fish traps made of reeds or hardwood splits were placed in the weir. Fish drifted downstream into these traps, or were driven there by lines of men who walked downstream while beating the water.

Indians frequently fished with poison when the streams were low in the summer. The fishermen would find a pool where large numbers of fish were trapped, and drive a line of stakes into the streambed across the head of the pool. At an appointed time, a group of Indians would arrive with bags of buckeye leaves and bark and devil's shoelace (*Tephrosia virginiana*). Wooden mallets were used to pound the plants on the heads of the stakes, and the remains slowly dribbled into the water. Men at the base of the pool tossed dying fish on the bank, and also speared or netted fish as they tried to escape. Neither poison harmed the meat, and the active ingredient in devil's shoelace is also found in rotenone — a poison that is widely used by wildlife agencies to sample fish populations today.

Indians also fished for Atlantic sturgeon when they entered Piedmont and Coastal Plain rivers to spawn. These fish grew to lengths of 18 feet, and 12- to 14-footers were not uncommon. William Byrd, an early explorer of North Carolina and Virginia, offers this account of an Indian catching a sturgeon found napping on the surface.

"The Indian, an Occaneechee, ran up to his neck into the creek a little below the place where he had discovered the fish, expecting the Stream wou'd soon bring his game down to him. He judg'd the matter right, and as Soon as it came within his Reach, he whip't a running noose over its Tail. This waked the Sturgeon, which being strong in his own element, darted immediately underwater and dragged the Indian after him. The man made it a point of honour to keep his hold, which he did in apparent danger of being drown'd. Sometimes both the Indian and fish disappeared for a quarter of a minute, and then surfaced at some distance from where they dived. At this rate, they continued flouncing about, till at last the hero suffocated his Adversary, and hauled his body ashore in Triumph."

THE INDIANS' EFFICIENT PURSUIT of game did not prevent them from paying reverence to the animals they killed. Hunting and fishing played integral roles in the religion of the eastern woodland tribes. Indians saw themselves not as lords having dominion over other creatures, but as one tribe among many. Animals belonged to tribes complete with a master animal who was a "giver of the game." This animal was usually larger than others of his kind, and could not be killed. However, the stature of animals varied. Esteemed game animals and birds (because they could fly) were part of the Upper World. Snakes, insects, fish and other lower forms of life were part of the Lower World. When they died, good Indians went to an Upper World where game was plentiful, women were young and pretty, and the weather was sunny and warm. Bad hunters, lazy Indians and other of low character went to a cold, dreary, disease-ridden Lower World populated by cannibal spirits, scolding old women, and snakes.

Fishing lacked the religious significance of hunting because fish were associated with the Lower World. However, hunting was shrouded with ritual and legend. One interesting legend says that in the beginning men and animals lived in harmony. However, as the human population grew and wanton killing of animals increased, the animals gathered in council to protect themselves and each animal picked a disease which would punish hunters who wasted game and didn't respect their kills. Consequently, North Carolina Indians always burned a few bones from their kills in their campfires as a sacrifice to Sacred Fire, a symbol of the Upper World, and also sang ritual songs at kill sites to appease the spirit of the slain animal.

These rituals offered a considerable incentive for Indians to practice ethics in their hunting. According to Cherokee belief, Little Deer, master of the deer tribe, questioned the spirits of slain deer to see if the hunter had sung the deer song. A lapse could be costly. Irreverent hunters paid for their omissions by suffering an attack of rheumatism, courtesy of Little Deer.

Native American Foods and Cookery in Pre-colonial North Carolina

By Eloise F. Potter

Illustrated by Sheree Worrell

When the first European colonists reached Roanoke Island, North Carolina, 400 years ago, they found the land occupied by people they called Indians. These Native Americans, whose ancestors had been living in North America for more than twenty thousand years, welcomed the newcomers and entertained them at bountiful feasts. Indians showed the colonists how to find wild foods and cultivate vegetables that were entirely new to European palates long accustomed to a diet dominated by yeast breads, dairy products, and red meats.

One Englishman described the Indians as "very sober in their eating, and drinking, and consequently very long lived because they do not oppress nature." Although the Indians knew nothing of vitamins, minerals, proteins, or cholesterol, they appear to have enjoyed the wide variety of fruits, vegetables, whole-grain cereals, fish, and lean meats recommended by modern nutritionists. Because they had no hogs, cows, chickens, honey, or refined sugar, their diet was relatively low in animal fat and sweets. Lacking butter, the Indians used instead vegetable oils (including oil pressed from sunflower seeds), bear grease, and fat rendered from Passenger Pigeons. Sap from the Sugar Maple, Sweet Birch, and other trees was the primary source of sweetener before Europeans brought honey bees, sugar cane, and sugar beets to the Americas. The sap was boiled to make syrup and sugar.

Indian cooks also had to make do without black pepper and many other herbs and spices from the Old World. However, they quickly adopted the foods introduced by European settlers, including apples, carrots, and cabbage, just as the colonists adopted many Indian foods and cooking techniques. The famous New England clam bake and Boston baked beans, as well as much of what we call "Southern cooking," were adapted from traditional American Indian cookery.

Cooking methods included boiling stews in a clay pot over an open fire, roasting on a spit, broiling over a grill, baking in hot ashes, and steaming in a pit lined with hot rocks and wet plant materials such as seaweed. Another method of cooking in a rock-lined pit was to build a fire in it, extinguish the flames once the rocks were very hot, and place a pottery cooking vessel on the hot ashes in the bottom of the pit.

Fish, venison, and bear meat were cut into small portions and smoked (dried) on stakes placed near the fire. Smoked meats were strung on bear grass or other strong plant fibers and hung above the fireplace or from the rafters. Later the dried meats were added to soups and stews.

Although many nuts, acorns, seeds, and roots were ground into flour, corn (maize) was the staple food of Native Americans. At least six varieties were grown. The usual method of cultivation was to plant several grains in a hill and surround the hill with plantings of squash, beans (green, wax, lima, kidney, pinto, and others), sweet potatoes, and pumpkins. The vines could climb the corn stalks, thus providing the maximum amount of harvest for the area of land cleared. Other crops included sunflowers, peanuts, red and green peppers, gourds for utensils, and tobacco for ceremonial purposes. One variety of sunflower cultivated by the Indians, and known today as the Jerusalem Artichoke, has a potato-like rhizome that can be cooked or eaten raw.

Indians ate some fresh corn (roasting ears), but most of the crop was dried for use throughout the winter. Dried corn kernels were removed from the cobs, soaked in water, and cooked in water like fresh corn. Dried kernels also were skinned by soaking or boiling in a weak lye-water solution made from wood ashes. Thorough washing through several waters removed the tough skins and excess lye. Skinned corn (whole-kernel hominy) was cooked and eaten as a hot cereal or added to soups and stews. Hominy usually was cracked into several pieces before cooking, and most often it was ground into cornmeal. The coarse bits of hominy sifted from the cornmeal (called grits or hominy grits) were cooked for serving as a hot cereal or added to soups and stews.

Seeds of sunflowers and other composites, Amaranth, and Lamb's-quarters were often ground and mixed with cornmeal; flour made from nuts, acorns, and various roots was used in the same way.

Sometimes the dried corn kernels were parched in hot ashes prior to skinning. This was usually done when Indians were going to use the cornmeal on the trail. To avoid wasting time hunting or cooking, they ate parched cornmeal dry, mixed with maple syrup or honey (once it was available), or moistened with water. Pemmican—dried meat pounded into a paste, mixed with fat and berries, and shaped into small cakes—was also carried on the trail.

The several varieties of corn grown by Indians included that all-American favorite, popcorn. The first Thanksgiving feast shared by Indians and the Massachusetts colonists apparently lacked cranberry sauce, but it reportedly ended with the serving of a basketful of popcorn.

WILD FOODS OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Indians gathered hundreds of wild plants for food, medicine, dye, fiber, basket making, or other useful purposes. Wild onions and garlic were consumed in great quantities, even in the best of times. During periods of famine, Indians ate animals and plant materials that were not a part of their regular diet. Listed below are some of the wild foods used by Native Americans in North Carolina.

FRUITS AND BERRIES

Blackberries
Cherries
Crabapples
Cranberries
Elderberries
Grapes
Ground Cherries (Husk Tomato, *Physalis pubescens*)
Huckleberries (Blueberries)
Mayapples (Mandrake)
Mulberries
Old-field Apricots (Maypops, fruits of the Passionflower)
Pawpaws
Persimmons
Plums
Prickly Pear (a cactus)
Raspberries
Serviceberries (Juneberries)
Strawberries

NUTS

Beechnuts
Butternuts
Hazelnuts
Hickory nuts
Chestnuts
Black Walnuts
Sweet acorns (e.g. Live Oak)
Bitter acorns (must be treated with lye or boiled through several waters to leach out tannic acid)

GREENS (SALLET)

Amaranth (Redroot, Pigweed, Wild Beet, *Aramanthus retroflexus*)
Christmas Fern (fiddle heads)
Coneflower
Crowfoot
Dandelion
Lamb's-quarters (Pigweed, Goosefoot, *Chenopodium album*)
Milkweed (blossoms, too)
Mustard
Poke
Saxifrage
Selfheal
Sheep-sorrel (Sourgrass)
Shepherd's-purse

ROOTS AND RHIZOMES

Arrowhead (Wapatoo)
Bracken
Cattails
Field Garlic
Indian Potato (Groundnut)
Jack-in-the-pulpit
Ramps
Smilax (Greenbriar)
Spring Beauty
Trout Lily
Wild Onion

MISCELLANEOUS PLANTS

Cane Grass (wild grain)
Honey Locust
Horsemint
Mint
Mushrooms
Redbud (blossoms eaten by children)
Sassafras
Spanish Bayonet (Yucca; buds eaten)
Spicewood
Sugar Maple
Sweet Birch (Black Birch, Cherry Birch, *Betula lenta*)
Wintergreen
Yaupon

MAMMALS

Beaver
Black Bear
Elk
Groundhog
Muskrat
Opossum
Rabbits
Raccoon
Skunk
Squirrels
White-tail Deer

BIRDS

Ducks
Geese
Swans
Mourning Dove
Passenger Pigeon (now extinct)
Quail (pheasant, partridge)
Wild Turkey
Rails
Various shorebirds and songbirds such as robins and meadowlarks
Bird eggs

MISCELLANEOUS ANIMALS

American Alligator
Frogs
Turtles
Turtle eggs
Freshwater fishes
Freshwater clams
Crayfish
Saltwater fishes
Saltwater clams
Oysters
Conchs
Crabs
Grasshoppers
Locusts (cicadas)
Yellow-jacket grubs

NATIVE AMERICAN RECIPES

Most of the recipes given below have been adapted for modern kitchens. Baking soda is recommended instead of wood ashes lye, and butter or margarine instead of the traditional fats; otherwise, the ingredients are those used by North Carolina Indians prior to the arrival of European settlers. You may want to add or substitute herbs, spices, fruits, vegetables, or meats that are readily available in grocery stores. Sugar, honey, or molasses may be used in place of maple syrup. Recipes that call for cooking or drying over or before the fire or in hot ashes can be adapted to the campfire, charcoal grill, kettle grill, or smoker.

BEVERAGES

Native Americans relied heavily on drinks flavored with the roots, fruits, or leaves of native plants. However, many of their teas were more for medicinal and ceremonial purposes than for the dinner table. Some tribes produced beer and wine, but they could not store fermented beverages for future use because they had no suitable bottles or corks.

Sassafras Tea

Scrub an 8-inch-long sassafras root well with a stiff brush, rinse, and scrape away the bark. Cut root into 2-inch lengths, place root and bark scrapings in a saucepan with 1½ quarts of cold water. Bring to a boil slowly and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, and let tea steep for 10 minutes. Strain and serve. Sweeten if desired. Maple sap, reduced about 4 to 1 by boiling, may be used instead of water in making sassafras tea.

Mint Tea

Wash 10 large stalks of fresh mint. Place mint in a saucepan with 2 quarts of cold water. Bring slowly to a boil. Turn off heat, cover, and let steep for 5 minutes. Strain and serve. Some cooks prefer to use crushed leaves for making mint tea.

Honey Locust Drink

Gather honey locust beans when they are ripe. Strip them in half lengthwise and soak them in hot (not boiling) water for a while. Remove and discard beans. Strain liquid through a cloth. Sweeten the strained juice to taste. Serve hot or cold. Beer can be made from honey locust beans as well as from ripe persimmons.

Old-field Apricot Drink

Gather ripe old-field apricots, the fruits of the Passionflower. Pour hot water over them, squash out the pulp, and strain mixture through a cloth. Serve hot.

FRUITS

Dried Pumpkin

Peel ripe pumpkin and cut into rings. Hang rings on a stick and dry slowly before the fire. Store in the attic until ready for use. Wash and stew just as you would fresh pumpkin. Dried pumpkin can also be eaten without cooking. Dried pumpkin seeds, like dried squash seeds, can be parched in hot ashes and eaten.

Baked Pumpkin

Wash one small pumpkin well, place on a pie pan, and bake in a moderate oven for 1½ hours. Remove from the oven and cut a hole (3 to 4 inches in diameter) in the top of the pumpkin. Scoop out the pulp and seeds. Baste the flesh of the pumpkin with a mixture of maple syrup, water, and melted butter or margarine (2 tablespoons of each). Replace the top and continue cooking in a moderate oven for about 40 minutes longer, basting occasionally. Serve whole, scooping out portions at the table, or cut into wedges. Top each serving with a little of the syrup mixture. Honey and apple cider, both introduced by European colonists, may be substituted for the maple syrup and water.

Cranberry Sauce

Although it apparently was not served at the early Thanksgiving meals, Indians did know how to make cranberry sauce.

Wash 2 cups of fresh cranberries. Combine them with ½ cup of maple syrup (or honey) and 1 cup of water. Cook over medium heat about 10 minutes, until the berries pop open and the sauce thickens. Skim the foam from the surface, cool the sauce, and refrigerate until ready for serving. For a spicy sauce, add ½ teaspoon cinnamon and ¼ teaspoon cloves, neither of which was used by the pre-colonial Indians.

BREADS

Ash Cake

Make a stiff dough of cornmeal and warm water. Using the hands, shape the dough into an oval loaf or pone. Rake ashes off a hot stone in the bottom of the fireplace. Cover the stone with oak leaves, put the pone on the leaves, and cover it with more leaves. Pile red-hot ashes on top and bake until the bread is done. Corn pones may also be baked in a modern oven or fried in a skillet or on a griddle.

Gritted Bread

Use fresh corn that is a little too mature for stewing or boiling on the cob. Shuck four ears of corn and scrape the kernels off the cob (or use a homemade "gritter," an old washboard in which holes have been punched with a large nail). Add ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon soda, pour into a shallow greased baking dish. Bake in oven at 375 degrees F for one hour or until firm and browned. Cut into squares and serve hot with butter. Gritted Bread can also be cooked like Ash Cake.

Bean Bread

Method 1: Add cooked dried beans and some of the liquid from the bean pot to cornmeal. Using the hands, shape the mixture into pones. Wrap each pone in green corn leaves; tie securely with plant fibers or white twine. Drop into boiling water and cook like dumplings. This bread is made without salt to keep it from crumbling. Plain corn pones can be cooked this same way. Gritted corn can be used instead of regular cornmeal.

Method 2: Put 4 cups of white cornmeal in a bowl. Add boiling water until the corn can be made into patties

(pones). This is called "killing the corn." Add 4 cups of cooked pinto beans and a little bean broth to the cornmeal. Shape into balls about one-half the size of a baseball and wrap in the corn shucks. Tie the shucks in place with cotton string and drop into boiling water. Cook in boiling water for about 15 minutes. To serve, remove shucks, break up the pone on a plate, and pour bean broth over the bread. Serve with sallet.

Chestnut Bread

This is made just like Bean Bread, but cooked chestnut meats and their cooking water are substituted for the beans. It is recommended that the chestnuts be cut into small pieces before they are cooked.

Cooked beans, chopped and cooked chestnuts, or pieces of cooked sweet potatoes may be added to any kind of cornbread.

VEGETABLES

Succotash

Indian people traditionally mixed together several vegetables, such as hominy, beans, and pumpkin or corn, beans, and squash. Cooks added meat when it was available. These mixtures were generally called "succotash" by the Europeans who learned to cook as the Indians did. Today, however, succotash usually is a mixture of just corn and lima beans—or some other type of bean.

Put 1 pound of meat cubes (venison or bear meat preferred, but stew beef will do) and 2½ pounds of dressed game birds (or chicken) in a large kettle. Add 2 quarts of cold water, bring to a boil and simmer covered for 1½ hours. Carefully lift fowl from the pot, remove meat from bones. Return meat to pot.

Wash and quarter three medium white potatoes, peel and quarter one small butternut squash; add to meat and simmer another 30 minutes.

Add 1½ cups of fresh lima beans (or one 10-ounce package of frozen limas) and 1½ cups of fresh corn kernels (or one 10-ounce package of frozen corn), simmer 15 minutes longer, stirring occasionally to mix ingredients well.

Drain the stew. Put 2 cups of the broth back in the pot, reserving the rest for use in other recipes. Serves eight.

Salad Greens (Sallets)

The tender new growth of many early spring plants provided a welcome change from the dried fruits and vegetables used most of the winter during the times before canned and frozen products were available. Several different plants—almost anything that is not too fibrous—are usually picked and cooked together. Strong-flavored sallets may be mixed with a mild one such as amaranth. Greens are parboiled, drained, salted, and cooked some more (fried) with grease. If poke sallet is used, it should be cut when the plant is very young, no more than 6 inches tall, then parboiled and drained several times before it is eaten or mixed with the other greens.

Leather Britches

Gather green beans as soon as the pods mature and wash in cold water. Break off the ends and string the pods on a heavy thread. Dry the beans in the sun for several days. Be sure to bring them inside at night and during rainy weather. Hang the dried pods from the rafters or on the wall for future use. To prepare, soak the beans for 1 hour or overnight in enough water to cover them, add the beans to boiling water, reduce heat, and simmer all day. Add water as necessary to keep the beans covered. Season to taste with salt and grease. Serve with cornbread, which can be used to sop up the potlikker.

Corn with Walnuts

Empty one 16-ounce can of water-packed, whole-kernel corn (not cream style) into a pot; heat. Add ⅛ to ¼ cup of black walnut meats, broken, and 2 tablespoons of butter or margarine. Heat and serve. Other nuts may be substituted for walnuts.

FISH

Salted Fish

Clean fish, rub with salt, and let stand overnight. String the salted fish on a stick the next morning. Hang the stick before the fireplace. Turn the fish often to roast them evenly. Salted fish can also be fried, but they will not have the same smoked flavor.

Dried Fish

Cut fish into strips or chunks. Skewer pieces on sharpened sticks and hang over or before the fire. Turn often and continue the drying process until the fish does not drip any more. String dried fish on bark thongs or bear grass and hang in a dry place until ready to use in soups and stews.

Fish Soup

Method 1: Boil fresh or dried fish in a pot of water. If fillets are not used, be sure to remove the bones before adding the rest of the ingredients. Thicken the soup by adding coarse corn siftings (coarse cornmeal). Season with wild onions and greens if they are available.

Method 2: Clean fish and bake until very brown. Put into a pot of water and cook until done. Serve with mush.

MEATS

Acorn Stew

Cut 2½ to 3 pounds of meat (round steak will do if you are short on venison) into bite-size pieces. Simmer in 1 quart of water for about 3 hours, or until well done. Salt to taste. Strain the broth from the meat and set aside. Shred the meat and place it in a wooden or plastic bowl; toss the shredded meat with ¾ cup of acorn flour. **Do not use an aluminum bowl because the metal will discolor the flour.** Pour the hot broth over the mixture, stir, and serve in individual bowls. Acorn flour is made from sweet acorns, such as those of the Live Oak. Grind the shelled acorns into a very fine flour.

Sweet acorns are good eaten raw right out of the shell.

Venison and Hominy Stew

Boil 1 pound of cubed venison (or beef) in 3 cups of water until tender. Water may be seasoned with ½ teaspoon of salt. Add one No. 2 can of hominy, half the hominy juice, and 2 or 3 tablespoons of hot red chili. Bring to a boil. Add the rest of the hominy juice and serve.

Smoke-cured Meat

Cut meat such as venison into cubes or strips. Skewer pieces of meat on a sharpened stick and place before a hot fire. Turn often until the meat stops dripping. Remove meat from the stick and string pieces on a bark thong or bear grass. Hang in a dry place for future use. This meat may be made into a soup or stew just as it is. If the meat is tough, it should be softened by pounding before it is used. Use only a little salt for seasoning.

Dried Bear Meat

Cut the meat into strips and dry before the fire until the meat no longer drips. To keep the meat all winter, hang the dried strips across the rafters on a basswood stick and cover with a cloth. To prepare the dried bear meat for the table, remove it from the stick and pound it into a powder, like cornmeal. Put this powder in a pot of plain water and boil until the flavor suits you. Serve with mush.

Jerky

Making dry meat takes about three days. Cut meat (deer or beef flank steak) into thin, lengthwise sheets about one-quarter to three-eighths of an inch thick. Cut sheets into strips about an inch wide. Hang on a pole (not a wire) in the hot sun, preferably in a screened enclosure. Turn twice daily. The best jerky is completely sun dried, but after meat is dry on both sides, the process can be completed in a slow oven (150 degrees F). To store, place jerky in a paper sack or cheese cloth and keep in a cool, dry place.

Squirrel Stew

Dress the squirrel and wash inside and out; rub with fat (lard) and salt to taste. Bake squirrel before the fire or in the oven until it is well browned. Cut the squirrel into pieces; put pieces in a pot with a little water; cook until the bones can be removed from the meat. Remove bones and thicken the gravy with a little meal that has been moistened with water; cook until the meal is done.

Quail

Dress birds, put them on a stick before the fire or over hot coals; roast until browned. Roasting may continue until the birds are done, or the browned birds may be placed in a pot of water and boiled until well done. Thicken the liquid with a little cornmeal, salt to taste. Cooked either way, the birds may be served with mush.

Wild Fowl and Corn

Stew wild fowl (or chicken) until well done. Add cooked skinned corn (whole-kernel hominy) and cook together until the flavors blend. Cooked beans also may be added. Season to taste.

MISCELLANEOUS

Egg Soup

Beat eggs slightly and drizzle into boiling water that has been seasoned with salt and grease. Use about 20 ounces of liquid for each large egg. Bits of leftover meat and finely chopped herbs may be added. Serve hot with mush.

Beaten eggs may be added to various soups and stews. Do not stir until the eggs have set.

Mush

Mush is good served by itself or with meats, soups, and stews. Top mush with butter and maple syrup (or honey) when it is used as a hot breakfast cereal. Tastes vary, but a good starting point is to use five parts water to one part cornmeal; increase or decrease the amount of water to obtain the desired consistency. A quarter cup of cornmeal makes one large serving.

Method 1: Bring plain water to a boil in a pot. Wet cornmeal with a little cold water. Add the wet meal slowly to the boiling water and stir until it is done, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Method 2: Add salt to a pot of water; bring to a boil. Stir in cornmeal and cook until the meal is done, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Cornmeal Gravy

Put some water (or milk if you prefer), salt, and red pepper in a clean skillet or in one where meat has been cooked. Stir in cornmeal and cook until the meal is done. This may be eaten by itself or with bread for breakfast or served with vegetables at dinnertime.

Cornbread Soup

Slice cold cornbread as thin as possible and toast both sides. Drop pieces into boiling water that has been seasoned with grease, meat skins, or meat.

Mushrooms

Gather or purchase edible **(nonpoisonous)** mushrooms. Wash off the dirt, boil mushrooms in water for about 1 or 2 minutes (parboil), wash again, and fry in grease.

FOR FURTHER READING

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YEAR OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN

1986

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

Many diverse ethnic groups have woven their proud and unique histories and traditions into the fabric of present day life in North Carolina. Native Americans, the first inhabitants of our great state, have the longest and proudest of these cultural influences. Throughout the centuries, these Americans have contributed in a special way to the social, economic, and agricultural progress of our state and its people.

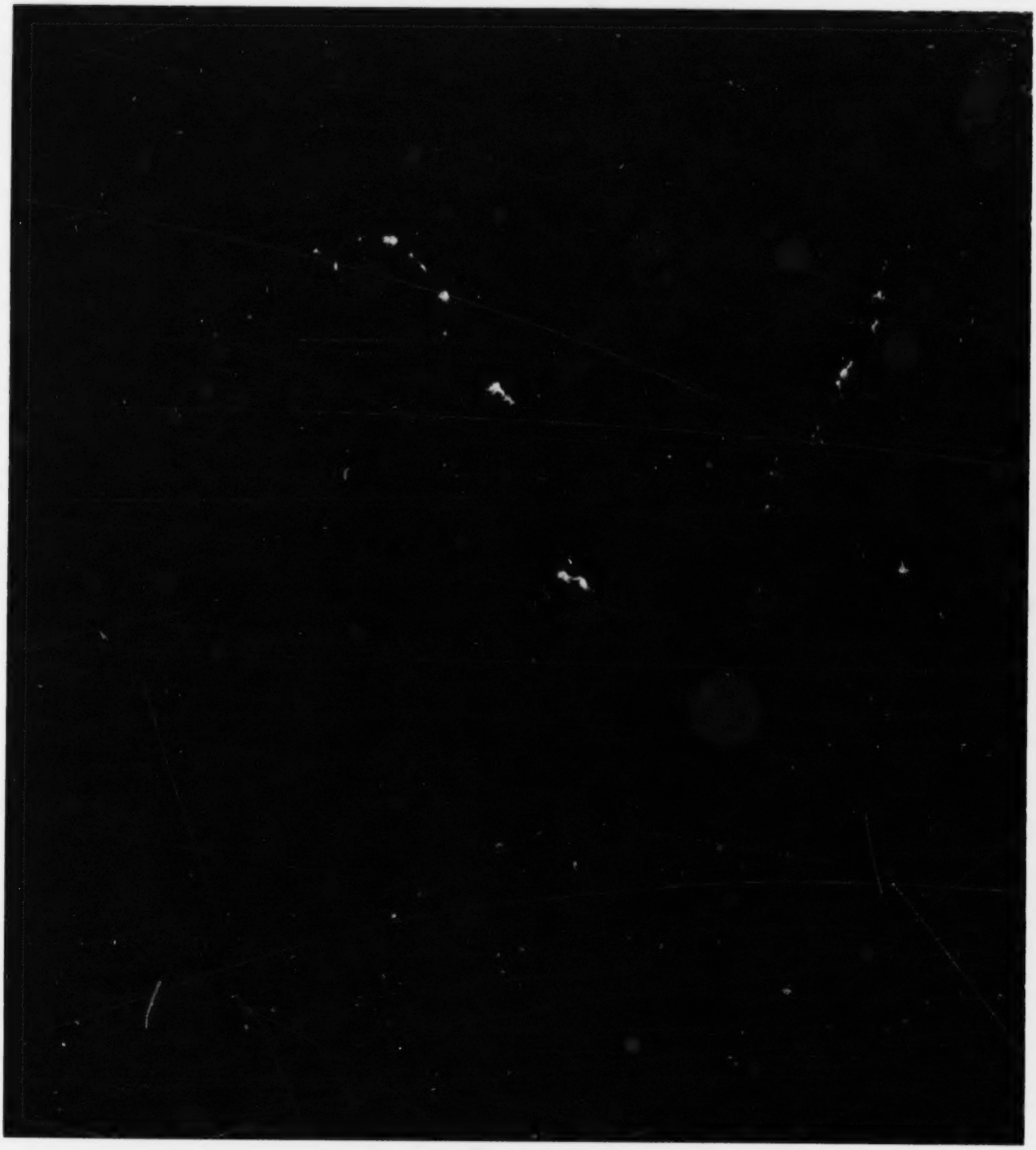
Now numbering 65,000 persons, the descendents of these first North Carolinians continue their contributions to the welfare of our state in the tradition of their ancestors.

The state of North Carolina currently celebrates the four hundredth anniversary of its settlement by English colonists who were assisted immeasurably by the support and aid of our Native American peoples.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JAMES G. MARTIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim 1986 as the "Year of the Native American" in North Carolina, and call upon all our citizens to devote this period to recognizing and honoring the past and present contributions of North Carolina's Native Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this tenth day of January in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

(Seal) JAMES G. MARTIN



Indian Fish Trap

Remnants of the rock fish traps constructed by Indians are still visible in many North Carolina rivers. This one is on the Little Tennessee River.